

The Benevolent Society in Queensland

Creating caring and inclusive communities and a just society

The Benevolent Society, Australia's first charity, has been caring for vulnerable people, families and communities for nearly 200 years.

Established in 1813, we are an independent, non-religious organisation working to drive positive change in response to society's needs.

We have a long history of pioneering social change in New South Wales, and we are excited to now also be working in Queensland, helping to build strong, healthy and vibrant communities across the State.



Queensland has experienced the highest population growth of any state in Australia and human service provision has struggled to keep pace with increasing demand. Our aim is to build social infrastructure and promote social inclusion in communities with the highest levels of disadvantage.



Who The Benevolent Society helps

We help the most vulnerable people in society and disadvantaged communities. We provide services to more than 16,000 children and adults each year in metropolitan, regional and rural areas across NSW and in Queensland. We support people from all backgrounds including indigenous Australians and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.



We recognise that overcoming social and economic disadvantage requires advocating for more fundamental systemic changes.

A growing footprint in Queensland

Our work in Queensland began in 2007 when we launched the North Gold Coast Early Years Centre, one of four centres funded by the Queensland Department of Education and Training. The centre commenced operation in March 2008 and is part of a pilot being evaluated as a possible model for State-wide rollout. Our second Early Years Centre at Browns Plains opened in late 2009.

Our two Early Years Centres and the Labrador Child and Family Centre provide a full range of early childhood health, education, family support and parenting programs.

A new initiative in Strathpine, the Mother Baby Hub is a holistic women's wellbeing centre, bringing together a comprehensive range of services, including a GP, physiotherapist, psychologist, occupational therapist, beauty therapist and a financial literacy program. Mothers groups and midwife facilitated information sessions are also held to promote information sharing and social contact for new mothers. Services are provided at one child friendly community based centre that also offers a play area for children and a café.

We deliver financial literacy and a matched savings program, Saver Plus, to people on lower incomes at our North Gold Coast and Browns Plains Early Years Centres and the Mother Baby Hub, Strathpine. This initiative is funded by ANZ and the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

Our Family Intervention Service based at Beenleigh and Gold Coast is an intensive family support program assisting children on child protection orders where case plans aim for them to be returned home or work is done to prevent them from entering Foster Care.

In Logan, our Personal Helpers and Mentors Service, assists adults with chronic mental health issues with peer support and linkages into appropriate community services. Funding for this initiative is provided by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

In 2009 we launched our inaugural Queensland Leadership Program. This program brings influential leaders from government, community and business sectors to work together over 10 months to develop their leadership skills and find new ways to address some of Queensland's most challenging social issues. The 2010 Queensland Leadership Program will commence in September 2010.

Our latest initiative and a first for Queensland is a new statewide support service for Queenslanders affected by adoption. This service, Post Adoption Support Queensland provides individual counselling, targeted group programs, information meetings and intermediary services for those wanting to make contact with birth relatives.

These initiatives form the foundation of a network of community programs and services that will allow The Benevolent Society to meet the needs of vulnerable Queenslanders.

Working in partnership

To be effective in this phase of growth and development, we believe it is essential to work closely with local service providers and communities. We have developed partnerships at local and state-wide levels and work closely with government and non-government organisations to implement new programs and to support social planning and service development.

We have joined key peak bodies and are participating in local and State-wide forums to build and strengthen the role of the non government sector in Queensland.

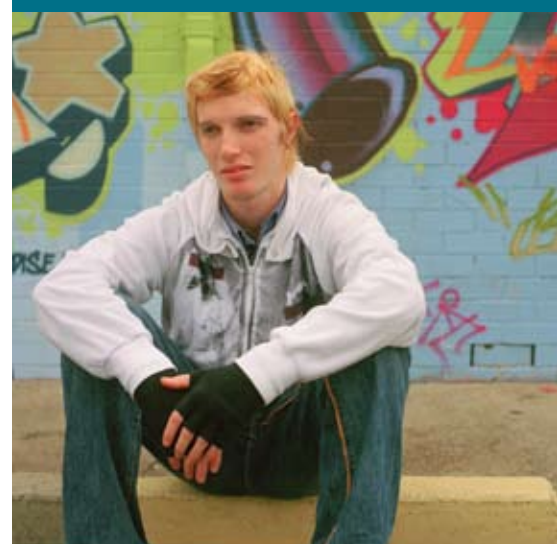
About Us

Some of our major achievements as social pioneers and innovators include:

- Securing the old age pension
- Providing shelter for homeless children and adults and food and cash relief during the Depression
- Establishing the Royal Hospital for Women Sydney, Australia's first maternity hospital and pioneering district nursing in Australia
- Setting up the first baby health care in Australia and introducing the Early Intervention Program for vulnerable mothers and newborns
- Launching Social Ventures Australia and Social Leadership Australia, pioneering new models of leadership development and social entrepreneurship
- Joining forces with three other leading not-for-profit organisations to create Goodstart, the new company that will run many of the ABC Learning Centres across the country



We have a strong commitment to improving educational and health outcomes for children, and we are excited to be playing a leading role in the implementation of these new centres in Queensland.



What The Benevolent Society does

Every year our 800 paid staff and 900 volunteers help us to provide services that support people at every age and every stage of life. Our vision is that every person is healthy, safe, connected and has a meaningful and productive role in their community.

- We work to ensure that **children** are nurtured and safe with their families, free from abuse and neglect
- We help **women** make positive futures for themselves and their families and support them to move on from domestic violence
- We help **older people** to age well and live independently for as long as possible with dignity and respect
- We support **people who are carers** for a loved one
- We provide information, counselling and support for **people affected by adoption**
- We are improving the financial skills and knowledge of **people who are vulnerable to financial exclusion**, through our financial education programs
- Our **social leadership** and **community development** programs empower people to lead change in their own communities
- We deliver **Out-of-Home Care** services (foster, relative and kinship care) for children and young people who are unable to live with their birth families
- We assist **people with severe mental illness** to better manage their daily lives and participate more fully in the community
- Our **research and advocacy work** supports policy and practice change

For further
information visit
www.bensoc.org.au

Our expertise in providing services, our involvement with individuals and communities experiencing disadvantage, and our expanding program of research and evaluation put us in a strong position to contribute to debates on social issues and to public policy decision-making.

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